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HEADQUARTERS 14TH ARMORED DIVISION
A.P.O. 446 US ARMY

nwb
16 February 1945.

HISTORY FOR MONTH OF JANUARY
G-3 Section, 14th Armored Division

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With the opening of the month, the Division was not operating as a unit but several of its elements were on the line. CC"R" under the name of TASK FORCE HUDELSON was holding part of the VI Corps front around BARENTHAL.

The 62d Armored Infantry Battalion, 94th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mech), 500th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, one company of the 125th Armored Engineer Battalion and normal attachments of Signal personnel and Military Police plus other units outside of the Division made up the force.

On the night of 31 December - 1 January, the enemy started their New Year's day attack and the 19th Armored Infantry Battalion and "A" Company of the 25th Tank Battalion was sent to reinforce Colonel Hudleson's Force.

This necessitated several changes in the Division assembly area around BOUXWILLER. CC"B", consisting of the 47th Tank Battalion, and the 25th Tank Battalion minus were sent North to the vicinity of INGWILLER - ROTHBACH - ZINSWILLER to guard the mountain passes.

CC"A" was still attached to the XV Corps and had not been under Division control since late in December.

On 2 January, the 62d Armored Infantry Battalion which had been with the Task Force, reverted to Division control. The Battalion had held off the blunt of the enemy's New Year's Eve attack and was disorganized. Lt. Col. Myers' battalion was ordered to assemble in the vicinity of ZINSWILLER. The 117th Cavalry Squadron, an outside unit, was also put under Division control by VI Corps order.

The 62d Armored Infantry Battalion had come under Division control at 1100. Later in the day all of the elements of TASK FORCE HUDELSON, including its Headquarters, which belonged to the 14th Armored Division was returned to Brigadier General Albert Cowper Smith's control.

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However, all units outside of the 62d had a hard time disengaging after being relieved and it was several days before they were out of the line, especially the 19th Armored Infantry Battalion.

On 2 January, CC"A" was also returned to Division control by Seventh Army order and closed in the Division assembly area at 1655 after a difficult journey from the XV Corps' sector.

Upon arrival CC"A" (68th Armored Infantry Battalion and 48th Tank Battalion) took over the job of guarding passes into the VOSGES between WERTWILLER and INGWILLER. CC"B" continued to be responsible for the INGWILLER - ROTHBACH - ZINSWILLER zone.

The 500th and 501st Armored Field Artillery Battalions were placed in direct support of the 313th Infantry Regiment on 3 January. On the same date, the 499th Armored Field Artillery Battalion was placed in general support of the 45th Infantry Division.

4 January found very few changes in the Division. All units continued on their assigned missions except "D" Troop of the 94th Cavalry Squadron (Mecz) which was sent to WEYERSHEIM and attached to the 79th Infantry Division.

On the following day, "B" Company of the 47th Tank Battalion was attached to the 79th Infantry Division and sent to MARIENTHAL.

(X) On the 6th of January, the general trend grew in stature and all of CC"A" was attached to the 79th Infantry Division. Consisting of the 48th Tank Battalion, 68th Armored Infantry Battalion, 500th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, "C" Company of the 125th Armored Engineer Battalion, "C" Troop of the 94th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mecz) plus normal attachments of Signalmen and Military Police, the Combat Command marched to an assembly area in the vicinity of SOULTZ-sous-FORET.

On January 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th, there were no changes in the missions of the Division. The remaining elements continued to guard mountain passes and conduct patrols.

The Division (-) was on the move on January 11th. The 14th Armored Division moved from BOUXWILLER to an assembly area to the East and Northeast in the vicinity of MORSBRONN-LES-BAINS - WOERTH. It was from this assembly area that the Division was to move into battle of RITTERSHOFFEN - HATTEN and play a large part in saving the Alsace plain against the major German thrust.

The Division attacked on the 12th and although CC"A" had been fighting in RITTERSHOFFEN for several days under the control of the 79th Infantry Division, it reverted to 14th Armored Division control with the commitment of CC"B" and CC"R" in the area.

CC"A" attacked RITTERSHOFFEN at dawn. By 1230, its elements had advanced 400 yards into town. The 68th Armored Infantry Battalion made contact with the 3d Battalion of the 315th which had been cut off.

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House to house fighting was bitter all day and by 1900 CC"A" had cleared the western half of the town against stubborn and attacking enemy.

CC"A" had to withdraw the 48's tanks to NEIDERBETZDORF under cover of darkness to re-supply and re-fuel.

CC"B" also had a difficult time during the day. The Combat Command had attacked East from the vicinity of HOHWILLER at 1130. Heavy artillery and mortar fire was received and three tanks were lost to AT fire. Elements of the 62d Armored Infantry Battalion fought their way to a position 300 yards north of HATTEN but were forced to withdraw to a line RITTERSHOFFEN - LEITERSWILLER by heavy artillery, mortar and small arms fire.

CC"R" was not committed the first day but was later to have the toughest fights during the battle.

The attack was continued on the 13th. CC"A" plus the 3d Battalion, 315th Infantry moved at 0800. They advanced against heavy small arms, artillery and mortar fire to the enemy strong-point in the church in the eastern part of town. The 48th Tank Battalion attacked the southern part of town and cut the RITTERSHOFFEN - HATTEN road.

At 2115, the enemy counter-attacked with infantry and flame-throwing tanks. The Germans made a slight penetration but the attack was stopped and the main defenses remained intact.

In the meantime, during the day, CC"B" attacked HATTEN three times from the north. CC"R" was attacking from the south. CC"B" succeeded in penetrating but was later forced to withdraw to the previous day's positions by heavy anti-tank fire from RITTERSHOFFEN, HATTEN, BUHL and STUNDWILLER.

CC"R" entered the fray with a vengeance on the 13th. The Combat Command jumped off at 0800. Attacking HATTEN from the south and southwest and in the face of intense small arms, artillery and mortar fire succeeded in getting three companies and two platoons of "D" Company, 47th Tank Battalion into the southern part of HATTEN at 1645.

The 2d Battalion of the 315th Infantry Regiment had been cut off for several days and contact was made in the town.

For the next six days battles raged in the two towns without let down. We kept attacking and the enemy kept counter-attacking. We failed to re-establish the MLR east of HATTEN but in turn stopped some of Germany's best troops, the 10th Panzer, the 25th Panzer Grenadier and the 7th Parachute Divisions from breaking through and over running the Alsace Plain in a major Rundstedt offense.

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On the 14th, CC"A" renewed the attack at 0900. Made slight gains and then repulsed an enemy infantry and tank attack at 1430.

CC"B" maintained defensive positions and supported the attack of CC"A" and CC"R" with fire.

CC"R" launched its attack at 0800. Advanced steadily during the day but an enemy counter-attack at 2230 forced CC"R" to withdraw to the previous night's positions.

Slow but steady progress was made on the 15th by CC"A" and CC"R" with CC"B" again supporting. CC"R" received four separate counter-attacks. Stopped all four without gain and piled the enemy dead high.

On the 16th, CC"R" again attacked at 0800 and occupied two-thirds of HATTEN. Enemy pressure increased late in the afternoon from north and northeast, developing into a counter-attack of estimated Battalion strength at 1715. The Germans used Automatic weapons, flame-throwers, rocket launchers, tanks and self-propelled guns.

The counter-attack was stopped and CC"R" reorganized to continue the advance the next day.

CC"A" and CC"R" with CC"B" supporting by fire continued to attack on the 17th, 18th and 19th. Progress was slow but steady.

On the 20th the order to withdraw to the new HAGUENAU line was received from VI Corps.

The withdrawal was made on the night of January 20-21 without incident.

CC"A" covered the withdrawal of the 79th Infantry Division from RITTERSHOFFEN to the HAGUENAU-PFAFFENHOFEN line and reverted to division control at 1500. Closed in vicinity of WILWISHEIM at 1800. CC"B" completed withdrawal to vicinity FURCHAUSEN at 1300. CC"R" closed in vicinity of WOLSCHHEIM at 1015. Division Artillery reinforced the fires of the 79th and 103d Divisions during the withdrawal.

The division GP closed at MORSERONN-les-BAINS and opened at DETTWILLER at 0515.

The 25th Tank Battalion which had been attached to Vth Corps on January 19th reverted to Division control and was put in Combat Command "B" at 1800 the same day.

On the 22d C Company of the 25th was attached to the 79th Infantry Division at 1800. Troops B and D of the 94th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mecz) was ordered to relieve the 12th Armored Division screening the Corps South boundary along the line OLWISHEIM-

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MARLENHEIM. C Troop was attached to the 35th AAA Brigade.

CC"B" moved to vicinity of MOMMENHEIM on the 23d.

On the 24th no change was made in the Division which was resting and refitting but on the 25th CC"B" was attached to the 79th Division.

CC"B" returned to Division control the next day but in the meantime had helped to restore the new MLR which the enemy had succeeded in penetrating the night before.

A Company, of the 47th Tank Battalion relieved C Company, 25th Tank Battalion which was attached to the 79th on January 27. The 499th was supporting the fires of the 101st Airborne Division, 500th AFA the 103d and the 501st the 36th Infantry Division.

All other units of the Division were rehabilitating, refitting, and training.

No changes were effected on the 28th and 29th but on the 30th one platoon of D Company, 47th Tank Battalion, was attached to the 79th Infantry Division and on the 31st CC"B" was attached to the 36th Division.